

Leaders Under 40 in 1994. Dr. Greer has also been honored by two U.S. Presidents.

Dr. Pedro José Greer Jr. was brought up in a family with a tradition of love and service for our fellow man, formed by his father Dr. Pedro Greer, a prestigious Cuban gastroenterologist, and his mother, Mrs. Maria Teresa Medina Greer. Dr. Greer's great-grandfather fought for Cuba's freedom in 1898.

I would like to express my gratitude and congratulations to Dr. Pedro José Greer Jr. for his love and work for America and also extend this congratulatory message to his proud parents, his wife Janus Munley Greer, his children Alana and Joey and his sister and brother in law, Sally and Brian Belt.

HONORING SCHOOL FOODSERVICE DIRECTOR HELEN RANKIN

HON. JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 5, 1999

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to National School Lunch Week which we will celebrate next week. Having grown up in the restaurant business, I feel a special camaraderie with school food service professionals. Every day, professional across the country ensure that our students have at least one hot, nutritious meal to help them grow and learn.

Maine is blessed with many extraordinary school food service professionals. But one in particular stands out—Helen Rankin, foodservice director for Maine School Administrative District 55, based in Hiram, Maine. Hiram is not what anybody would describe as a metropolitan area. It is a small, rural area much like most of Maine.

Helen has brought a degree of professionalism to her operation that belies the small size of the school system. Her commitment to quality and top performance by herself and her staff has made her a leader in Maine and across the nation.

Earlier this year, Helen was featured in the national publication *School Foodservice & Nutrition*. The article just scratches the surface of Helen's activities on behalf of her clients—school children in the Hiram area and beyond. She recognizes that school food services are a crucial building block in a child's education. We all know that hungry children cannot learn and that their bodies cannot grow and develop as they should.

Helen Rankin is a dynamic, dedicated professional. Maine students have benefitted tremendously from her leadership. I am proud to have the opportunity today to pay tribute to her, and to all of Maine's school foodservice professionals. I hope that next week, during National School Lunch Week, all of my colleagues will take the opportunity to recognize these hardworking individuals.

Mr. Speaker, I insert the *School Foodservice & Nutrition* article about Helen Rankin to be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD at this point.

HELEN RANKIN

BRINGING BIG-TIME PROFESSIONALISM TO A
SMALL-TOWN DISTRICT

(By Mark Ward, Sr.)

Try to find Hiram, Maine, on a road atlas and it might take you a while. But while the

town may be off the main highway, it's squarely on the map of leading school foodservice operations.

"We don't have the facilities of a larger district, but we're still on the cutting edge. And even if we don't have a lot of students, we do a lot for them," reports Helen Rankin, foodservice director for Maine School Administrative District No. 55, based in Hiram and serving five rural communities in the southwest corner of the state.

What puts Hiram on the school foodservice map is a simple maxim: "I insist on professionalism," declares Rankin of her school nutrition team. For example, though the district's six schools serve just 800 lunches a day, each member of Rankin's staff is an ASFSA member, has taken a sanitation course and is a ServSafe certified food service handler. And despite an annual budget of just \$400,000 (which includes a district appropriation of just \$11,000), the department pays the expenses for its employees to attend state association conferences.

That commitment to professionalism and continuing education starts with Rankin herself. After 40 years in school foodservice, including 30 years in her present post, she's not resting on her laurels. At the state level, she has helped to transform what was a small association into a professional organization that now boasts 700 members and conducts a statewide peer review program. And, as a former Maine School Food Service Association (MSFSA) president, Rankin enjoys respect and clout with state and local policymakers.

And though Hiram may be a small dot on the roadmap, Rankin sees no limit to her own professional horizons. She has spoken at conferences across the country, been nominated twice for ASFSA national office and served as Northeast Regional Director on the National Association's Executive Board. Throughout the 1990s, Rankin's influence has been felt on the ASFSA Public Policy and Legislative Committee and, more recently, its Political Action Committee (PAC).

"By making a commitment to get involved with my profession," Rankin reflects, "I've had opportunities that a person from a small rural town, who started out with only a 9th-grade education, might only have dreamed of."

FROM PTA TO PROFESSIONAL

Forty years ago, the notion that a school cafeteria worker could be a "school foodservice professional" was rarely encouraged—or even understood. Back then, Rankin says, she first became involved with school meals "because the PTA, which I was president of, was responsible for the hot lunch program." When the group hired a new cook who quit after just one day, it was up to Rankin to fill the gap. "We had 75 students at that school and, after volunteering at first, I ultimately got paid \$15 a week to cook the meals and clean the kitchen," she recalls.

Over time, Rankin received her own high school equivalency certificate and went on to earn a bachelor's degree. Then in her ninth year as de facto school foodservice manager, the school was incorporated into a newly formed district. In turn, that brought the hiring of a district foodservice director. Like the cook a decade earlier, the person who filled this position resigned after a brief stint, which paved the way for Rankin to assume the post.

"In those days we had no free lunch program, and I can remember kids who would bring in a jar of water and a piece of bread to eat," Rankin continues. Now, 30 years later, "We have reimbursable meals, a breakfast program, a la carte service—plus marketing and promotion, and the expectation

that we have to be financially self-supporting. Times certainly have changed," she adds.

It also was 30 years ago that Rankin was introduced to ASFSA and the concept that school foodservice could be a professional pursuit. "MSFSA's conference were small," she recalls, "So I went to my first state meeting in Connecticut. That got me fired up and, along with some other foodservice directors from Maine, we decided to start building up our own state association and making it more active."

Professional involvements "are hard work" Rankin admits. And many times her volunteer commitments require extra hours at work because, lacking funds to hire a full central office staff, Rankin first must handle all the business affairs of the district office. "Yet you learn so much by going to meetings and participating in your profession," she remarks. "Every time I go to a conference or event, I find out what's going on in the industry and the profession. Best of all is the exchange of ideas you get, because you can talk with other professionals one-on-one."

PRESERVATION AND PROGRESS

And while Rankin is a firm believer in the need for school foodservice professionals to meet with and learn from one another, she also emphasizes the need for the profession to build relationships with government, industry—and the public.

That realization came to Rankin—and many other school foodservice operators—in a big way, five years ago, when a push was made in Congress to eliminate the National School Lunch Program. As a result, child nutrition advocates from both large urban districts and small rural schools joined with politicians, industry partners and others to make their case for the need for school nutrition programs to remain a federal program.

Today, ending the National School Lunch Program is no longer an issue. The visibility and respect that the school food-service profession earned on Capitol Hill during the debate remains in force.

To preserve these gains and secure more victories, Rankin reports that the goal of the ASFSA PAC is to "ensure that supporters of child nutrition are re-elected to public office."

Like school foodservice directors across the country, Rankin also has focused attention on building bridges at the state level. Back home in Maine, she has helped the profession establish a presence in the state legislature, governor's mansion and in city and county councils statewide. Currently, school food-service directors in Maine are pressing for increased support of nutrition education programs.

In a career that already has spanned 40 years, Rankin has set a personal goal she hopes to achieve before retirement. "School foodservice should be respected enough to be recognized as an integral part of the education process, and therefore included in school planning," she asserts. "For example, determining how much time is allotted for lunch should have the same weight as planning for class periods, rather than just giving lunch whatever time is left over."

Because Rankin is employed in a small district, she enjoys—in a way not available to directors in many large districts—personal and daily contact with school officials. Therefore, she's enthused about the prospects of realizing her goals and seeing her district become a national model for integrating nutrition and education planning.

"Whether your district is large or small, the basic challenges are the same," Rankin concludes. "For example, I may not have the

same computer system that a large district has. But that's okay, because the real issue is that, with kids, you always need the human touch. Whatever your district's size, whether it's large or small, city or country, the most important thing we serve our students is a smile."

**NATIONAL AMUSEMENT PARK
RIDE SAFETY ACT OF 1999**

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by ten of my colleagues in introducing "The National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act of 1999." They include Representatives MILLER (CA), HOFFEL (PA), WEXLER (FL), KUCINICH (OH), LIPINSKI (IL), MALONEY (NY), WEINER (NY), DELAUNO (NY), NEAL (MA) and WAXMAN (CA). This bill will restore the ability of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to investigate serious accidents in amusement parks that offer rides, such as roller coasters, which are permanently fixed to the site. While the CPSC has the authority to investigate accidents that occur on rides that move from site to site, rides that are permanently fixed in theme parks are off limits. This bill would correct this anomaly by closing the "roller coaster loophole."

Roller coasters are, in general, quite safe. But in the course of just 6 days at the end of August, an unusual number of tragedies on amusement park rides highlighted the fact that when something goes wrong on these rides, the consequences can be catastrophic. Today's rides are huge metal machines capable of hurling the human body through space at forces that exceed the Space Shuttle and at speeds that exceed 100 miles per hour. They are complex industrial-size mechanisms whose design, maintenance and operation can push the limits of physical tolerance even for patrons in peak condition, let alone members of the broad spectrum of the public who are invited to ride each day.

The fatalities at the end of August, which U.S. News & World Report termed "one of the most calamitous weeks in the history of America's amusement parks," included:

August 22—a 12-year-old boy fell to his death after slipping through a harness on the Drop Zone ride at Paramount's Great America Theme Park in Santa Clara, California;

August 23—a 20-year-old man died on the Shockwave roller coaster at Paramount King's Dominion theme park near Richmond, Virginia;

August 28—a 39-year-old woman and her 8-year-old daughter were killed when their car slid backward down a 30-foot ascent and crashed into another car, injuring two others on the Wild Wonder roller coaster at Gillian's Wonderland Pier in Ocean City, New Jersey.

The Consumer Product Safety Act charges the CPSC with the responsibility to protect the public against unreasonable risks of injuries and deaths associated with consumer products. However, rides in "fixed locations" such as theme parks are currently entirely exempt from safety regulation by the CPSC. State oversight is good in some places, bad in others, and in some states, the state has also exempted "fixed locations" so that there is no federal or state regulatory body overseeing

ride safety. The number of serious injuries on "fixed location" rides has risen dramatically from 1994 through 1998.

Why do we bar the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) from investigating accidents on roller coasters and from sharing that information with the rest of the country?

It makes no sense.

When a child is killed or injured on an amusement park ride, should the decision to investigate depend on whether the amusement park ride is "fixed" versus "mobile"?

Emergency-room injuries more than doubled in the last five years, yet the CPSC is prohibited from investigating any—not one—of those accidents, even when it involves a ride that may be in heavy use by mobile carnivals or fairs.

According to the CPSC Chair, Ann Brown, "The current regulatory structure as it applies to fixed-site amusement park rides is not sufficient to protect against unreasonable risks of injuries or deaths caused by these rides."

She is right.

The accident statistics highlight the folly of granting an exemption from federal safety regulation to amusement park rides. Injuries are rising rapidly on the one category of amusement park rides that the CPSC is barred from overseeing. The manufacturer or owner of every other consumer product in America is required by law to inform the CPSC whenever it becomes aware that the product may pose a substantial risk of harm—but not the owners or operators of "fixed-site" rides in amusement parks.

Some in the industry argue that this legislation is unnecessary because the states or the industry itself can provide sufficient protection. This argument fails on two counts.

First, many states have simply failed to step in where the federal safety agency has been excluded. The CPSC reports that there is still no state-level inspection program in Alabama, Arizona, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Vermont. In addition, Florida exempts the big theme parks from state inspection, Virginia relies on private inspections, and New York exempts New York City (which includes Coney Island.) California had no state program until last month.

Second, states are not equipped and not inclined to act as a national clearinghouse of safety problems associated with particular rides or with operator or patron errors. That is a federal function. Yet the federal agency charged with the protection of the public against unreasonable risk of injury or death is currently, by law, forbidden from carrying out this important task.

I urge my colleagues to support this measured effort to close the loopholes and to ensure patrons of amusement parks that the level of protection afforded by law will no longer hinge on the question of whether the ride itself is "mobile" or "fixed."

**PROFILES OF SUCCESS HONORS
MRS. HILDA ORTEGA-ROSALES**

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. PASTOR. I rise before you and my colleagues today to ask you to join me in paying

tribute to a woman who is described by friends as "La Super Chicana," Mrs. Hilda Ortega-Rosales.

Hilda recently received an Exemplary Leadership Award at Valley del Sol's Annual Profiles of Success Leadership Awards in Phoenix. Valley's award ceremony is the premiere Latino recognition event in Arizona each year that acknowledges Arizona's leaders and their contributions.

Raised in a south Phoenix barrio, Hilda was the third child of eight children. As she grew up, Hilda cared for her brothers and sister, put in long days to attend school, helped with household chores and worked in a vegetable packing house to earn money. Even today, she has not shortened those long days and always finds a way to fit in numerous volunteer hours in addition to her job as Customer Service Director for American Express Merchant Services.

Currently, Hilda sits on the city of Glendale Planning and Zoning Commission. Other volunteer posts have included Commissioner for Glendale Parks and Recreation Department, District Chair for the Arizona State University (ASU) Legislative Network Committee and Board Chair for Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., in Phoenix.

From presidential to school board elections, Hilda has tirelessly given countless hours of her personal time to political campaigns. Other organizations which have benefited from her community involvement include Los Diablos, the Hispanic Alumni Association for ASU; Mujer, Inc.; United Way; Arizona Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; and ASU's Hispanic Mother/Daughter Program.

Taught by her parents to give back to her community, Hilda's volunteerism and dedication also is compelled by her desire to promote social justice, political power and economic development for Latinos. She is an exemplary role model for our country and someone who has personally made a significant impact on the Latino community.

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, Hilda's community service has been immense. She has instilled the importance of community responsibility in family members and many individuals who look up to her. Therefore, I am pleased to pay tribute to Hilda Ortega-Rosales and I know my colleagues will join me in thanking her and wishing her continued success.

**A TRIBUTE TO THE MOST REV.
BISHOP ALFRED L. ABRAMOWICZ**

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 6, 1999

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to a distinguished Bishop in my district, the most Rev. Alfred L. Abramowicz Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Pastor Emeritus of the Five Holy Martyrs Parish, who recently passed away.

Born on January 19, 1919, he completed his secondary education at Quigley Preparatory Seminary and college at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary of Mundelein. Graduate studies were completed at Gregorian University, Rome, 1949–51 with a Licentiate of Canon